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Nonprofit Pays Top Executive \$1.2 Million

Nonprofit agency holds two dozen contracts with the state of Florida.

By STEVE BOUSQUET
TIMES/HERALD

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Legislators rarely investigate the details of contracts, but Senate President Don Gaetz, R-Niceville, has challenged senators to exhume contract details in agencies' budgets to see how money gets spent.

In what it called a routine review of contracts, the Department of Juvenile Justice discovered that Schossler earned \$397,940 in salary and \$862,837 in other compensation in 2010, according to the foundation's Form 990 filing with the IRS.

The previous year, Schossler made \$382,906 in salary and \$579,914 in bonuses and incentive compensation, that year's IRS filing shows.

Law & Justice Committee Meeting
December 8, 2013

Exhibit 26

Schossler, who worked for 15 years in state corrections and social services jobs, said the foundation board of directors decided he deserved a boost to his retirement package after years of building up the foundation. Some of the compensation was in the form of land that the foundation no longer needed, he said.

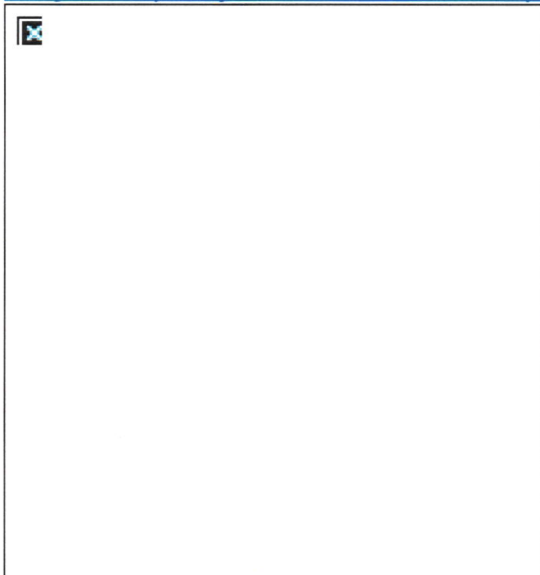
"You work your butt off for 25 years, and then you get ready to retire, and somebody decides to pay you some retirement money and somebody doesn't like that," Schossler said.

One of the foundation's board members is Schossler's sister, Linda Durrance, the board secretary. He said she is required to abstain from votes on compensation matters.

Henry and Rilla White were longtime residents of Bronson, a crossroads town and the county seat of Levy County, where he was a teacher and superintendent. They also ran White's Grocery, according to the foundation's website, www.hrwhite.org, which defines quality as "constantly striving for the best and gearing ourselves for the unexpected."

The unexpected is what happened when Schossler met with Walters earlier this month.

[Nonprofit Pays Top Executive \\$1.2 Million](#)By STEVE BOUSQUET



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<p>TALLAHASSEE | A nonprofit company that holds two dozen state contracts to care for troubled juveniles in Florida pays its chief executive more than \$1.2 million a year in salary and benefits, most of it courtesy of taxpayers.</p><p>Outraged, the state Department of Juvenile Justice says the money paid to William Schossler is excessive and should be spent to help kids. The state wants the hefty paydays to stop.</p><p>"It was never the department's intent that such a large share of the funding would go to compensate the top administration of your corporation instead of into direct services for our youth," wrote Gov. Rick Scott's juvenile justice chief, Wansley Walters, in a Dec. 12 letter to Schossler. "That is something that neither the department nor the citizens of Florida can abide."</p><p>Schossler, 65, of Chiefland is president of the Henry & Rilla White Foundation, a Tallahassee-based nonprofit that has done work for the state for more than two decades. Named for Schossler's grandparents, the foundation manages residential treatment beds, provides counseling and therapy to troubled children after they complete residential care, and has programs to divert kids from delinquency.</p><p>In the current budget year, the foundation's 23 juvenile justice contracts statewide have a total value of \$10.2 million.</p><p>The battle between the state and the foundation surfaces at a time when legislators are promising a more in-depth review of state contracts with private vendors, which comprise more than half of the state's \$70 billion annual budget yet receive only token scrutiny.</p><p>Legislators rarely investigate the details of contracts, but Senate President Don Gaetz, R-Niceville, has challenged senators to exhume contract details in agencies' budgets to see how money gets spent.</p><p>In what it called a routine review of contracts, the Department of Juvenile Justice discovered that Schossler earned \$397,940 in salary and \$862,837 in other compensation in 2010, according to the foundation's Form 990 filing with the IRS.</p><p>The previous year, Schossler made \$382,906

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The unexpected is what happened when Schossler met with Walters earlier this month.

When Walters ordered the foundation to propose a "plan of action" to cut salary overhead, the foundation responded with a report arguing that Schossler's salary and benefits are within the range of those paid to CEOs of similarly sized nonprofits. The 2009 report was done by Compensation Resources of Upper Saddle River, N.J.

Walters disagrees and says Schossler's bottom line reveals a "disparity" compared with other nonprofits that provide similar services for the state.

"There is no way that over the past couple of years you can have the level of executive compensation rise without seeing a reduction in services," Walters said in an interview.

Walters has directed the state agency to retool how it works. A big part of that exercise, called the "Roadmap to System Excellence," is a review of contracts with private vendors, which make up about two-thirds of the agency's budget.

In the Roadmap plan, Walters proposes ending contracts for aftercare services with vendors like the White Foundation and replace them with state oversight by juvenile probation officers, which she says will save nearly \$12 million.

Schossler says that would be a serious mistake and a step backward to the days when juvenile justice was mostly about protecting state jobs.

Schossler makes no apologies for his pay and benefits package.

"If there's something wrong here, I'm sure my board will fix it, but there's nothing wrong here," Schossler said. "If anything, my board thinks I'm underpaid."

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